

TRIBUTE TO GEORGE BROWN

HON. RON PACKARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 5, 1999

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this Opportunity to pay tribute to both a colleague and friend, George Brown.

I had the privilege of serving on the Science Committee during George's tenure as Chairman, and I valued the opportunity to learn from his leadership. George and I worked together on many occasions in support of interests important to our native southern California.

Mr. Speaker, George Brown was an unapologetic liberal, yet that did not stop him from actively working with and befriending Members from the other side of the aisle. In fact, George may forever be remembered for his ability to bring together all Californians serving in Congress. Today, my colleague JERRY LEWIS is doing a remarkable job of leading the California delegation. We should not forget that George Brown began this effort.

In George Brown, this institution has lost a distinguished Member of Congress, a faithful public servant, and a good man. George will be greatly missed, not only as a tireless advocate for the people of California's 42nd Congressional District, but as a close friend to those so fortunate to have known him.

IN HONOR OF THE LATE REP.
GEORGE BROWN

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 5, 1999

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak with fondness about the late Congressman George Brown. His death leaves us with one less person dedicated to the fight for America's future. When I came to Congress to try to end the Vietnam War, George was also fighting against that war. With his leadership, we brought our soldiers home and ended one of the lowest points in American morale and foreign policy. His fight for what was right didn't end with Vietnam. He fought for the environment, for education, and for the underprivileged throughout his career.

One of Representative Brown's legacies is the Environmental Protection Agency. Before George Brown, there was no single entity in government designated to protect American air, water, land, and wildlife. His dedication to protecting our ecosystem helped improve the quality of life for all of us and future generations. George Brown raised environmental activism from a few dedicated scientists to the general public, making the environment an issue and assuring that the government protected it.

Representative Brown interests went beyond preserving the environment for future generation; he cared deeply about the education of our children. George supported the establishment of educational loans. These loans have provided millions of Americans with the opportunity to go to college and contribute more to our society. Recently, he joined in support of building more schools, hiring

more teachers, and improving the quality of our classes. He was committed to quality education for our children.

George Brown fought to improve the lives of all Americans. He fought especially hard for those Americans who couldn't fight for themselves. Before coming to Congress, George worked to end anti-union laws and to ban discrimination. Once elected to Congress, he worked to enact the Civil Rights Act to address which discrimination against minorities. He also joined in the fight to improve health care, provide affordable prescription drugs, and even to protect our health care workers from accidental needlesticks.

Congressman George Brown fought for so many things that we now take for granted. George stood up for what was right for our environment, education, and the underprivileged. Beyond all of these accomplishments, he was an example to all of us. He stood up for what he believed in regardless of the potential political fall out. He exemplified the ideals that this country was founded on.

Although George is no longer with us, we will continue to fight to ensure that every American has the same rights, freedoms, and opportunities that some want to reserve for the elite few.

THE LYME DISEASE INITIATIVE
OF 1999

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 5, 1999

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, today I am reintroducing legislation to wage a comprehensive fight against Lyme disease.

This proposal represents the next stage of our campaign to reduce and then eradicate Lyme disease. It is a five year, \$125 million blueprint for attacking the disease on every front. In addition to authorizing the necessary resources to wage this war, the bill: (1) makes the development of better detection tests for Lyme the highest priority of Lyme disease research; (2) lays out a list of vital public health goals for agencies to accomplish, including a 33 percent reduction in Lyme disease within five years of enactment in the 10 highest and most endemic states; (3) fosters better coordination between the scattered Lyme disease programs within the Federal Government through a five-year joint-agency plan so that the left hand knows what the right hand is doing; (4) helps protect federal workers and visitors at federally owned lands in endemic areas through a system of periodic, standardized, and publically accessible Lyme disease risk assessments; (5) requires a review of our system of Lyme disease prevention and surveillance of search for areas of improvement; (6) fosters additional research into other related tick-borne illnesses so that the problem of co-infection can be addressed; (7) initiates a plan to boost public and physician understanding about Lyme disease; and (8) creates a Lyme Disease Task Force to provide the public with the opportunity to hold our public health officials accountable as they accomplish these tasks.

Mr. Speaker, Lyme disease is one of our nation's fastest growing infectious diseases, and the most common tick-borne disease in

America. According to some estimates, Lyme disease costs our nation \$1 billion to \$2 billion in medical costs annually. The number of confirmed cases of Lyme disease was nearly 16,000 last year, an increase of 24.5 percent from the previous year, and that is only the tip of the iceberg. Many experts believe the official statistics understate the true numbers of Lyme disease cases by as much as ten or twelve-fold. Lyme disease is sometimes called the 'Great Pretender' disease because its symptoms so closely mimic other conditions. Thus, it can be easily misdiagnosed. Worse still, our current detection tests are not always reliable and accurate enough to detect the disease in patients.

The Lyme Disease Initiative of 1999 builds on the accomplishments of the legislation introduced in the previous Congress, H.R. 379. As Members may recall, we were successful in getting a portion of that bill enacted as part of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999, as well as part of the Fiscal Year 1999 Defense Appropriations bill. The provisions from last year up dedicated up to \$3 million in Department of Defense funding dedicated for Lyme and tick-borne disease research, so that our soldiers and their families can be protected when they work and live in areas endemic for Lyme disease. This \$3 million in funding was a good start, but there is still so much that remains unknown about Lyme disease.

That is where the new proposal comes in. It is the product of countless meetings with patients and families struggling to cope with this terribly debilitating disease. I cannot tell my colleagues how many times I have met with families who have told me heart breaking stories about how they went from doctor to doctor without getting an accurate diagnosis, getting progressively weaker and sicker, while racking up massive medical bills. Sadly, the lack of physician knowledge about Lyme disease, and the inadequacies of existing laboratory detection tests, compound the misery. Consequently, we have consulted extensively with the organizations representing these patients, as well as with the agencies charged with implementing the new program, to ensure that the bill addresses these very real concerns.

In short, I believe this is a good plan that affirmatively meets the needs of patients, and one that is worthy of my colleagues' support.

THE LYME DISEASE INITIATIVE OF 1999

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE—LYME DISEASE INITIATIVE OF 1999

SECTION 2. FINDINGS

SECTION 3. FIVE YEAR PLAN OF ACTION, PUBLIC HEALTH GOALS

Establishes a Five-Year plan (authorizing \$125 million over five years) to reduce the incidence and prevalence of Lyme disease, and requires Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Defense, Agriculture, and Interior to collaborate in creating this five year plan.

Goal No. 1: Direct Direction Tests. The legislation directs federal researchers to make the development of a reliable, reproducible direct detection test for Lyme disease a priority. Without a good detection test, individuals will continue to get misdiagnosed, insurance companies will continue to dispute and deny needed treatments, and patients will not know if they are truly cured of Lyme.

Goal No. 2: Improved Surveillance and Reporting System. Requires a review of the existing reporting system for Lyme, including